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the NC TV series, takes off his skates to beat this weekend's episode of "Saturday Night Live." In a first for the 30-year-old Colorado native, who will be joined by musical guest Mumford & Sons.

But fans of the Lifetime TV romance aren't entirely pleased with one of the surprises coming up in the episode.

Hallmark Channel

Hallmark's Kristen Hager and Michael Ironside, shown in this Canadian photo, from the season finale of "Heartland."

Hallmark Canada/Facebook

Feb. 24, 2016

The Hallmark Series that serves as the setting for the season finale will officially be cancelled by the Canadian broadcaster Friday.

Dubbed the Hallmark cottage, the three-bedroom retreat in Ontario's Muskoka Lakes has been the subject of intense fan discussion since the episode aired.

Protagonists Shane Hollander and Eric Rousseau spend the summer there, and it's where they have their first romantic encounter and eventually begin a serious relationship, as they open up about their fears, their families and the possibility of a shared future.

Featuring first-to-calling windows and sweeping lake views, the cottage, says a release, is synonymous with "charged exchanges, careful conversations and unforgettable moments." — CP

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Hudson Williams tapped for Bobe Yaga drama at Crave

Feb. 24, 2016

Williams will also alongside Carrie-Anne Moss and Jeremy Sisto in "The Matrix" fresh And Iron, "Schitt's Creek" and Clark, Bardot of "Letterkenny" in "Yaga," a drama based on the Bobe Yaga myth. It's the first Canadian production Crave Friday's debuted last year.

The series is based on the hit play by Kat Sandler, which reimagines the Slavic myth of a child-eating witch who lives in a house on chicken bones as a small town mystery thriller with a compelling female anti-hero.

Williams will portray Dusty Park, the heir to a powerful family who has disappeared, while Reid will play a detective who comes to town to solve the case.

Mona Ayaz Katherine, who Crave describes as "a charismatic university professor with a taste for younger men," — CP

The hottest alone in hockey is embraced by fans and players at Toronto Pride

Feb. 23, 2016

The biggest fans of "Heated Rivalry" at the Olympics may be the Canadian delegation.

As part of the Olympic experience, athletes were gifted a printed plant. Many of the Canadian named Denis Shane or Kip, according to the delegation's lead press liaison, Tara MacKenzie.

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Canadian Alpine skier Kiki Alexander took the love a bit further, sharing on TikTok that the village's Canadian moose has been named Shane.

"If you know, you know," she wrote. — AP

'Heated Rivalry' spotlighting Montreal and its renowned bagels

Dr Alanna Bagel marketing director Benjamin Chaiyapichit wears a T-shirt with the company's logo in front of the Montreal skyline on Thursday, Feb. 5, 2026.

Andrew Vaughan/The Canadian Press

Feb. 7, 2026

"Heated Rivalry" is putting the spotlight on Montreal and among those reaping the benefits is one of the city's iconic bagel shops.

Online retailer Vogueland is the week following the episode's release on Dec. 11, according to the company's marketing director, Benjamin Chaiyapichit.

"Merchandise sales, especially the logo T-shirt, have almost tripled," he said in an interview. Bagel orders have also increased, he said, in a lesser extent, by about 5 per cent.

Sales were mainly concentrated in Quebec and Ontario, but there was also interest from other provinces and from the United States, Chaiyapichit said. Montreal bakery even shipped a box of its packaged bagels to Europe. And there was a bit of a boost in the United States, where the series has also arrived very successful).

But Montreal as a whole is seeing an uptick in interest among tourists, and Chaiyapichit said the company is considering partnerships with other local dealers to visit thanks to the immensely popular gay hockey drama. — CP

City of Regina urged to promote connections to 'Heated Rivalry'

Feb. 7, 2026

Some residents of Saskatchewan's capital are hoping their city can jump on the "Heated Rivalry" bandwagon, arguing Regina has also its share of gay hockey players.

In the opening scene of the series, hockey phenoms Shane Hollander and Eric Rousseau meet for the first time outside a Regina arena. The characters are both from the fictitious Swift Current Broncos, a Western Hockey League team that has left Saskatchewan for Alberta.

Resident Teresa Dietrich said she was surprised when she saw the scene, which displays the city's name over the door.

"Obviously it's not short in Regina, but you can envision it being at the Brandt Centre," Dietrich said.

She said the city could be using the moment to promote Regina to the rest of the world.

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Since the show became a smash hit, other cities, hockey teams, universities and businesses have used it to their marketing.

Dietrich noted McGill University changed wording on its social media account to describe Montreal as "Shane Hollander's hometown" after the university declared Shane Hollander the top recruiter the character's city roots.

Town Canada has also weighed in. In a social media post in January, the organization responsible for sugar-free maintaining Shane's red and white Nike jacket that emblemized the Maple Leaf. — CP

When Hudson and Connor Inside the Crease cuff where 'Heated Rivalry' found its start

Feb. 6, 2026

When Hudson Williams and Connor Storrie first sat down for their first chemistry read, casting directors Jenny Lewis and Sara Kay felt it instantly.

Even through a screen, the spark between the actors playing Canada's hard-hitting hockeyists Shane Hollander and Ilya Rozanov.

"They were so comfortable with each other. It was a real connection," says Lewis, noting that series creator Jacob Tierney helped set up rehearsal time on the call.

Jenny Lewis, Connor Storrie and Hudson Williams are shown in a scene from Crave's "Heated Rivalry." The Canadian Press

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"They were comfortable with each other. It was a real connection," says Lewis, noting that series creator Jacob Tierney helped set up rehearsal time on the call.

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It follows other libertine in Canada and the U.S. that have made digital versions of the audiobook and ebook, which inspired the hit Crave TV series, readily available to listeners — including the Calgary Public Library, Burlington Public Library and, notably, the New York Public Library.

Hoopla, a digital service that lets users borrow media from the weekend to may indeed, is offering a movement, and "take advantage of our public library's offer of free access to 'Heated Rivalry' on ebook or audiobook." — CP

Mark Carney meets 'Heated Rivalry' star Hudson Williams

Prime Minister Mark Carney poses for a photo on the red carpet with Hudson Williams, star of the TV series "Heated Rivalry," during a reception at Rideau Hall in Ottawa, Ontario, on Thursday, Jan. 29, 2026. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Sean Kilpatrick

Sean Kilpatrick/The Canadian Press

Jan. 29, 2026

Sex, politics and hockey collided as Prime Minister Mark Carney and other Ottawa dignitaries gathered with the star and creator of "Heated Rivalry" to toast the sexy success of the homegrown Crave TV series.

The unlikely scene — a room full of political leaders and TV industry players gathering to listen to a panel discussion about the hit show, including the prime minister and Hudson Williams, who plays hockey phenom Shane Hollander, Ottawa, on personal conference for the TV and media industry.

On the red carpet, Canadian star Hudson Ottawa Hollander on the about/presented Carney with a "Heated Rivalry" Team Canada Olympic jacket, clapping as he tried it on. Williams told Carney the Sisco was the same jacket he wore on the show, jokingly suggesting that it might still smell.

After a photographer encouraged the duo to hug, Carney suggested to Williams, "Do the big thing."

"What's the big thing? Oh, the big thing!" Williams exclaimed, as Carney took the actor's leg in his arms.

Later, in his opening remarks at the panel, the prime minister introduced Williams as "my new best friend, Shane." — David Friend

Internet-famous 'Heated Rivalry' Crosby Stross jacket to go on sale

Hudson Williams, star of the Crave "Heated Rivalry" presents Prime Minister Mark Carney with a Team Canada Olympic jacket, as Tara Lewis, Crave's director of marketing and digital strategy, looks on, Thursday, January 29, 2026. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Sean Kilpatrick

Sean Kilpatrick/The Canadian Press

Jan. 30, 2026

The Internet-famous Stross jacket from "Heated Rivalry" is making the leap from screen to real life.

First seen in Crave's hit gay hockey drama on character Shane Hollander when he plays for Team Canada at the Sochi Olympics, the Stross quickly sparked online enthusiasm, with fans repeatedly asking how they could purchase it.

Now, the show's production company, Accent Ogio Entertainment, has teamed up with Canadian owned clothing brand Province of Canada to produce and distribute the jacket. — CP

This University of Guelph hockey player is Shane Hollander's body double

Scott Gill, "Heated Rivalry" hockey body double, beside the Stross and actor Hudson Williams, alongside stand-in/athlete Cole Hagan, double Ralph Taggart and actor Connor Storrie.

Jennifer Stross

Jan. 25, 2026

While the risks are mostly a backdrop on the hit Crave series, it was up to a team of real life players, including Ionah De Simone, to make sure the action on the ice rang true.

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The 23-year-old University of Guelph student was one of the hockey body doubles who helped bring the Shane Hollander character to life in Toronto. He portrayed most of the complicated stretch and clean up shots for the character in the games and followed up on some of the other interactions.

The Toronto-raised Cayden Lipsett, who also played for the Canadian Hockey League's Niagara Icehogs, had invested a solid five hours each weekday for nearly two months in the role, he said in an interview.

Also ranking in his height, weight and skill level, De Simone said the casting director got in touch, imagining that he would be the perfect fit to double for one of the main characters.

With little sense of what the job might involve, he showed up on the first day to find himself on the ice with Hudson Williams and actor Ilya Rozanov (Scott Gill Rozanov, played by Connor Storrie).

"All the number 6 goes from Ilya, we're sitting on our phones doing nothing to. OK, my six-foot-sixer, tell them how to tape their sticks, tape their sticks." We even had to decide on a look for Shane's character."

De Simone turned out a few other suggestions that could, including the gym stretch Hollander does in the locker room, a move that Williams recounted on Jimmy Fallon's late-night show a few weeks back.

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Working on ready with the actors gave De Simone the kind of insights for his any "Heated Rivalry" series night.

For instance, he says Williams built out the universe of his character with small details, such as rebilling the name of his mom, Tonya Hollander, on the hoods of his stick. — David Friend

'Heated Rivalry' scores second season at Crave

Dec. 11, 2025

Canada's hot new hockey romance has scored a second season renewal.

Bell Media says its breakout hit "Heated Rivalry" will return to Crave and its U.S. streaming service Max for 2026 filmed, the series said Friday.

The LGBTQ+ series from writer-director Jacob Tierney has exploded in popularity over the past few months, with its most popular moments shared widely on TikTok and other social media platforms.

Hudson Williams and Connor Storrie star as rival NHL brothers Shane Hollander and Ilya Rozanov, who fall into a years-long relationship outside of the rink.

Crave says its streamy adaptation into its most sexchaul original series debut within the first seven days, though it did not provide exact viewership numbers.

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"Heated Rivalry" is based on the "Game Changers" book series by Nova Scotia author Rachel Reid.

Outside North America, several new distribution deals have been secured for the Crave original, including Sky in New Zealand and Shortcut Place in Australia.

HBO Max will have the show's rights in numerous regions of Asia, including Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Thailand and the Philippines, while deals with platforms in additional countries will be announced soon, including the United Kingdom. — David Friend/CP

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